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## REVIEWS AND MISCELLANY.

## DIVORCES GRANTED IN MICHIGAN DURING THE YEAR 1897.

A law passed by the legislature of 1897 requires county clerks to make a return to the Secretary of State of all divorces. This law took effect on August 29, 1897, but the returns, which were made for the first time in January, 1898, were for the entire calendar year, 1897. Each divorce is returned individually much in the same manner as a record of marriage, the following items being stated: Full name of each party; age of each in years; date of marriage; place of marriage; number of children in family; complainant; date of filing application; date of final action; alleged cause for divorce; whether contested; whether granted, refused, withdrawn, otherwise disposed of, or pending at end of year; conditions, if any. Besides the individual return on the schedule, the county clerk makes a summary, stating the total number pending at the beginning of the year; number of suits begun; divorces granted, refused, etc. It was found that these summaries were carelessly made in some cases, so that for the first year a compilation was based entirely upon the individual records of divorces granted, to which all of the figures given below refer.

It may be stated that not all divorces granted by the courts are properly entered on the records as such. The reason is that a small fee is required by the clerks of the courts for the final entry, and this is not always properly paid, either by the parties themselves or by their attorneys. As a result individuals may suppose themselves divorced and remarry, while the court records contain no record of the decree. This imperfection is probably not very great, and affects the data obtained by the United States Commissioner of Labor for Michigan some years ago. It is chiefly important to remember that the numbers given in the following tables are rather under the true figures.

The total number of divorces reported for the year 1897 was 1656. Of this number 423 were granted on the application of the husband,

and 1233 on application of the wife. Classified by place of marriage : 1360 of the marriages dissolved were performed in Michigan, 65 in the adjacent states of Ohio, Indiana, and Wisconsin, 101 in other states of the Union, 86 in Canada, 22 in other foreign countries, and 22 in unstated locality.

The total number of children affected by the divorce of their parents during the year was 1833, or a little more than one child to each divorce on the average. The distribution of children to divorced couples was as follows : —

	Total.	Number of Children in Family.													Unk.
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Divorces granted	1656	771	407	199	127	52	35	16	13	2	2	2	1	1	28

The average duration of marriage until the granting of a divorce was 10.7 years. The distribution by five-year periods was as follows : —

	Total.	Duration of Marriage in Years.											Unk.
		Under 5 Years.	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 34	35 to 39	40 to 44	45 to 49		
Divorces granted. . . . .	1656	472	464	301	177	115	61	25	21	5	1	14	

The principal causes alleged in the applications for divorces are cruelty, desertion, non-support, drunkenness, adultery, and imprisonment. Frequently two or three of these causes are stated in combination, so that in the following table a statement is given of the total number of suits into which each cause entered as a factor, the total number granted for each cause as the sole reason, and some of the principal combinations under each head : —

ALLEGED CAUSES.	NUMBER OF DIVORCES GRANTED.		
	Total.	Husband.	Wife.
All causes.....	1,656	423	1,233
<b>CRUELTY.....</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>672</b>
Cruelty.....	560	155	405
Cruelty and non-support.....	184	...	184
Cruelty and desertion.....	40	17	23
Cruelty and drunkenness.....	25	1	24
Cruelty and other causes.....	40	4	36
<b>DESERTION.....</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>309</b>
Desertion.....	405	203	202
Desertion and non-support.....	67	....	67
Desertion and cruelty.....	40	17	23
Desertion and other causes.....	20	3	17
<b>NON-SUPPORT.....</b>	<b>512</b>	....	<b>512</b>
Non-support.....	211	....	211
Non-support and cruelty.....	184	....	184
Non-support and desertion.....	67	....	67
Non-support and other causes.....	50	....	50
<b>DRUNKENNESS.....</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>99</b>
Drunkenness.....	39	4	35
Drunkenness and cruelty.....	25	1	24
Drunkenness and other causes.....	40	..	40
<b>ADULTERY.....</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>19</b>
Adultery.....	49	36	13
Adultery and other causes.....	13	7	6
<b>IMPRISONMENT.....</b>	<b>11</b>	....	<b>11</b>
Imprisonment.....	5	....	5
Imprisonment and other causes.....	6	....	6
Other and unknown.....	3	...	3

It will be seen that over one-half (51.3 per cent) of all divorces granted contain the allegation of "cruelty" as a factor, while about one-third of all the cases are granted on this allegation alone. About one-third of the total number of divorces involve desertion; these constitute a larger proportion (52.7 per cent) of the suits of husbands than of wives (25.1 per cent). Next to cruelty, non-support is the most frequent cause of divorces granted to wives (41.5 per cent). No divorces are granted to husbands for this cause. Drunkenness enters as a factor into 6.3 per cent of all cases, while adultery is alleged in 3.7 per cent. In the latter case, for obvious reasons, the statistics may be below the truth.

The above data are presented as a preliminary study of the results of the first year's registration of divorces in Michigan. A more complete analysis will be presented in the *Michigan Registration Report* now in press. There is certainly room for hope, when the system shall have become thoroughly established and the reporting officers have attained greater familiarity with the duties required, that some very valuable results will be obtained.

CRESSY L. WILBUR.

Division of Vital Statistics,  
Department of State,  
Lansing, Michigan, July 25, 1898.

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#### CLASSIFICATION OF CAUSES OF DEATH.

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The following circular letter has been sent by a committee of the American Public Health Association to registration offices of foreign countries, and to all state and municipal registration offices, boards of health, medical, pathological, statistical, actuarial, and other societies, and individuals making use of mortality statistics in the United States:—

The American Public Health Association at its meeting at Ottawa on September 28 to 30, 1898, recommended the adoption of the Bertillon classification of causes of death, a system reported to the International Statistical Institute at the session held at Chicago, 1893. The Conference of State and Provincial Boards of Health of North America also recommended the adoption of this system at the meeting held at Detroit, August 10 to 11, 1898.

Provision is necessary in adopting a system of classification of causes of death for regular periodical revisions in order to maintain it abreast of the advances of medical science. A plan for such revision has received the approval of the American Public Health Association, embracing the countries of Canada, Mexico, and the United States, and has also been accepted by the statistical service of France. This plan provides for the completion of the revision, with the coöperation of all countries using this system, by the year 1900, and its promulgation in connection with the session of the International Congress of Hygiene and Demography to be held at Paris